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ABSTRACT

A practicum on the control of burnout was developed for an inservice training program for special education professionals at Oxnard College (California). A review of current literature on the control of burnout was presented to an expert panel of special education faculty members who compiled a list of suitable topics for the practicum. Four major goals for inservice training were identified: (1) introduction of the concepts of burnout and tedium; (2) identification of work stresses commonly causing tedium and burnout in workers; (3) development of cognitive clarity in the distinction between two categories of stressful work features (those that are under the control of the individual and those that are not); and (4) development of tools for coping. (CB)

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IDENTIFICATION OF TOPICS FOR AN INSERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS ON THE CONTROL OF BURNOUT

SOCIETAL FACTORS

by

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ABSTRACT

Burnout, in education, is seen as a negative response to stress that results in physical and emotional exhaustion involving the development of negative self-concept, negative job attitudes and loss of concern and feeling for students. Human services professions contain built-in sources that appear to lead dedicated workers to become apathetic or burned out. This is especially true for the special education professional in the Community College whose responsibility is to provide appropriate educational services to all handicapped individuals on an ongoing basis.

The purpose of this Practicum was to develop topics for an inservice training program for the special education professional at Oxnard College on the control of burnout. A review of current literature was presented to an expert panel consisting of special education faculty members. A final list of suitable topics was decided upon by the panel. That information was presented to the Oxnard College Continuing Education Committee for their consideration in conducting an inservice training program. The panel and the committee perceived that an inservice training program on the control of burnout was deemed appropriate for the special education professional at Oxnard College.

The recommendations of the study were to include all the topics that were discussed during the presentation of the literature review along with this Practicum to the Special Education Oxnard College Administration. Future recommendations included: (1) sharing the program information with other special education professionals in the district; (2) sharing the information with the entire administration at the college; (3) collecting additional information and materials to be distributed to the special education professionals at the college as they become available in the literature; and (5) expand the Inservice Training Program to include invitations to the entire staff of special education professionals in the district.

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INTRODUCTION

Burnout destroys efficiency, drive, growth, enthusiasm, and if left unattended results in illness, absenteeism and the loss of valuable employees (Casteel and Matthews, 1984). The incidence of burnout is particularly high in the human service professions (Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980; Pines et al., 1981). Human services professions contain built-in sources which appear to lead dedicated workers to become apathetic or burned out (Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980). This is especially true for the special education professional whose responsibility is to provide appropriate educational services to all handicapped students on an ongoing basis (Begley, 1982). Collins (1977) concurred that burnout occurs as a direct result of working closely and continuously with troubled individuals with little or no opportunity to retreat.

Another potential source of stress comes from the special humanitarian characteristics of the special education professionals themselves. Most professionals in human services training programs learned by implication that their needs are not legitimate and the rewards inherent in the work of helping others should be enough to sustain them (Begley, 1982). Pines and Maslach (1978)

stressed that individuals in the helping profession should realize that their needs are as important as the clients they work with. It was further suggested by Stevens (1984) that professionals need to be trained to recognize job stress and ideally have organizational policy makers more sensitive to workers' needs so prevention, rather than remediation becomes the focus.

Burnout may be defined as a "progressive loss of idealism, energy, purpose, and concern as a result of conditions of work" (Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980:32). In general, burnout is a function of feeling inconsequential, feeling that no matter how hard one works, the payoffs in terms of accomplishment, recognition, or appreciation are not there. For example, it has been shown that when teachers' needs for self-actualization and self-esteem are unfulfilled there is a higher probability of burnout (Anderson and Iwanicki, 1981). Other literature has suggested that teacher burnout is the result of such stresses as student discipline problems, student apathy, overcrowded classrooms and shortages of available support staff, excessive paperwork, excessive testing, involuntary transfers, inadequate salaries, lack of promotional opportunities, demanding parents, lack of administrative support, role conflict and role ambiguity, and public criticism of teachers (Alshuler, 1980; Cichon and Koff, 1978; Dillon, 1978; Dunham, 1977; and Scrivens, 1979). Predispositional factors may also contribute to teacher

burnout. Bloch (1977), for example, reports that teachers who are obsessional, passionate, idealistic, and dedicated (as measured by the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) are more prone to battered teacher syndrome. Teachers who become burned out may be less sympathetic toward students, may have a lower tolerance for frustration in the classroom, may plan for their classes less often or less carefully, may fantasize or actually plan on leaving the profession, may feel frequent emotional or physical exhaustion, may feel anxious, irritable, depressed, and in general, may feel less committed and dedicated to their work (Faber and Miller, 1981).

Oxnard College's Special Education Department provides a variety of specialized services to the disabled students it serves. The majority of the special education educators have been working with this population for at least seven years. Begley (1982) indicated that individuals professionally involved in education for 7-10 years, experience the greatest feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Cherniss (1982) added that when individuals are expected to perform at high levels with expectations that are not always clear or realistic, they are conducive to stress and burnout. Identified as ambiguous areas of role definition for special education professionals are: roles dealing with parents and advocacy groups; maintenance of special education organizations; referrals; transportation; diagnosis and placement of

students; and direction of student services within the buildings (Robson, 1981).

The purpose of this study was to develop topics suitable for an inservice training program for this specific group on the control of burnout. The topic selection and identification process was the main focus of this Practicum.

Statement of the Problem

The Special Education Educators at Oxnard College must perform at high levels; and often with unrealistic assignments. These special education professionals fall into the high-risk group for burnout, according to the review of literature (Chernis, 1982). The development of topics for an inservice training program on the control of burnout was deemed appropriate by the panel consisting of members of special education educators. The topics will assist the Continuing Education Committee in presenting the proposed inservice training program to the special education administration at Oxnard College. The development of topics for an inservice training program on burnout for special education professionals will not only benefit the professionals at Oxnard College, but those employed by the District as well due to the close working relationships among the colleges. The topics that were selected for the program were designed to assist the special education professionals in decreasing contributing factors to burnout and enhancing their individual, professional and personal growth.

Background and Significance

Casteel (1984) strongly suggests that inservice programs for teachers on the identification and control of burnout should be considered imperative by administration. Additionally, Harris (1980) noted that the total dependency of education on people requires inservice education to help the staff grow. When instructors are dedicated, insightful, inspired workers, education can work even with the poorest organization and supplies, as cited by Rubin (1978). Furthermore, the establishment of low stress organization techniques as well as incorporating stress management techniques, assist in preventing burnout, promoting personal growth and encourage professional growth (Matthews, 1985).

The tragedy of burnout is that the malaise impacts precisely on idealistic, enthusiastic and energetic persons. An individual who is indifferent to his job will be least likely to burnout. One of the great costs of burnout, cited in the literature review is the diminution of the effective service of the very best people in a given profession (Pines, Aronson, and Kafry, 1981).

Understanding the concept and learning how to overcome the condition of burnout have been the major concerns of industrial psychologists (Marrow, 1981). More recently, researchers and practioners have begun to concentrate their attention on burnout in studies that treat the topic externally and symptomatically within the school organization. Only a few have been concerned about the impact it

has had on faculty and administration in the academic setting (Melendez, Guzman, 1983).

The cost of burnout is becoming enormous to this nation, according to Bartolome, (1980) in financial, social and psychological terms. Burnout can prevent personal and professional growth, hinder change and cause a lack of direction in educators; it is the antithesis of the goals of inservice education (Casteel and Matthews, 1984).

Providing Oxnard College with topics suitable for inservice trainings on burnout will become increasingly more important, if the District continues with its annual decreased funding for special services. Begley (1982) concurs that the responsibility of providing appropriate educational services to handicapped individuals is being complicated, by increasingly inadequate budgets; which in turn is placing additional workloads and pressures on the special education professionals. Fass (1984) studied the effects of stress on 274 regular and special education teachers in Arizona. He concluded that the stress levels of the special educators were significantly higher than those of the regular teachers.

Oxnard College's Special Education Department employs special education professionals who must perform at high levels and often with unrealistic assignments. These professionals, according to the review of literature, fall into the high-risk group for burnout. In addition, they may be more susceptible to burnout due to the multi-faceted

job duties they must perform. It has been deemed significant that the department be able to conduct an in-service training program on the control of burnout. The topics were developed and presented to the Continuing Education Committee and were designed to assist the special education professional in decreasing contributing factors related to burnout and to enhance their individual, professional and personal growth.

Literature Review

The foundation for the study for the development of topics for an inservice training program on the control of burnout was based on a review of related and appropriate literature pertaining to causes, effects, costs, alleviation and inservice training programs on the prevention and control of burnout. Although no study exactly duplicated this Practicum, enough similar studies and related information was obtained to provide a background of the subject area.

Burnout, a faddish and threatening term in today's working place, has been labeled a disease reaching the level of an epidemic, and the academic world is definitely effected. Willard McGuire, president of the National Educational Association, said that burnout among teachers, "threatens to reach hurricane force if it isn't checked soon." (Marrow, 1981:84). Increasing pressures on teachers have led to an awareness of the syndrome in education (Mendez, Guzman, 1983).

Stress resides in all individuals; however, burnout is a distinctive kind of work-related stress. Among corporate managers, the word is becoming socially acceptable (Greenberger, 1981). An estimated 10 percent of the overall executive population show symptoms of job burnout such as: exhaustion, detachment, boredom and cynicism, impatience and heightened irritability, a sense of impotence, a feeling of being unappreciated, paranoia, disorientation, psychosomatic complaints, depression and denial of feelings (Freudenberger, 1980).

The phenomenon of burnout originally focused on the "helping professions" or "human services" such as Social Work (Chernis, 1980). Studies on the subject have extended to other helping professions. It is the continuous interpersonal relationship between professional and client that causes emotional exhaustion, creates stress and finally changes an individual's behavior (Greenberger, 1981). Maslach, who conducted the pioneering research, defines burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that frequently occurs among individuals who do 'people work'--spend considerable time in close encounters with others under conditions of chronic tension and stress" (Maslach and Jackson, 1979:61). Burnout is thus specifically viewed as a phenomenon related to job stress (Maslach, 1982).

It would be nearly impossible to work efficiently without generating some degree of stress, according to the

experts and adrenalin must flow if one is to do a beneficial job (Rogers, 1983). But the cost of stress is high. Stress disorders cost organizations approximately 17 to 25 billion dollars each year in lost performance, absenteeism, and health benefit payments (McGaffey, 1978). The Washington Business Group on Health, a representative for approximately 500 national corporations, cited in a 1981 study that industry is losing more than one billion dollars yearly on problems related to stress resulting in low productivity, loss of time, accidents and medical costs. An additional 42 billion dollars a year was cited to be attributed to alcohol and drug abuse and dependency, that often occurs as reactions to stress. The impact of stress at the work place on all phases of living is obvious and cannot be ignored any longer. Excessive stress is harmful and affects one's health, productivity and family relationships.

A stressful job can result in a case of burnout through progressive symptoms: (Veninga and Spradley, 1981:38)

1. "The Honeymoon" is the beginning stage; high energy, enthusiasm, and job satisfaction start to wear off.

2. "Fuel Shortage" includes the early symptoms of inefficiency at work: dissatisfaction with the job, fatigued, sleepless nights, increased smoking or drinking, or other means of escape.

3. "Chronic Symptoms" involve one's awareness of physical and psychological symptoms--chronic exhaustion, physical illness, anger and depression.

4. The "Crisis" stage permits symptoms of burnout to reach an acute phase and to obsess the individual with problems.

5. "Hitting the Wall" is the stage of total professional deterioration and dysfunction of physical and psychological health.

The literature reviewed on the sources of stress among college faculty, suggests that work stress is the result of dissatisfactions prompted by academic retrenchment, inflation, unemployment and shifts in the composition of student bodies (White, 1980). Factors inducing stress include lack of faculty participation in decision making, the increase in underprepared students, students expectations of high grades, apathetic peers, and low salaries (Clagett, 1980). Work related areas of dissatisfaction cluster around functions of organization and management, including advancement, compensation and institutional organization and policies (Grahn, 1981). Salary, institutional support and institutional policies are the three highest ranking sources of stress for all faculty cited by Bender and Blackwell (1982). It is obvious from these studies that faculty are quite concerned with professional and economic security.

The sources of frustration of college faculty appear to be consistent with those of the special education professional. Special education professionals, rather than focusing on service delivery and program development, are now forced to justify the suitability of their services and program delivery systems due to the anti-discrimination legislation, for handicapped individuals (Lamb and Burello, 1979). Thus, the special educator is being lost amidst review audits, and becomes a victim of excessive workloads and unrealistic deadlines.

Despite the growing concern of the consequences of burnout, few studies were identified that focused specifically on the issues of the special education professional. Special educators have a unique set of responsibilities all of which contribute to high levels of stress and frustration. These individuals are faced with constant fiscal reductions, serious role ambiguity and conflict (Begley, 1982). Furthermore, research indicates an increasingly high incidence of staff absenteeism and turnover among the special education professional (Fass, 1984). The uncompromising mandates placed on the special educator call for faculty to assume responsibilities that go far beyond classroom instruction, such as: identification and placement of handicapped students, program development, administration and monitoring of Individual Education Plans (IEPS), and personnel training (Bensky, et al., 1980).

Levels of funding, federal commitment, federal and state partnerships, scope of the state education agencies, responsibilities for providing services and tax revolts, are all posing serious risks to institutional survival and are critical issues impacting on the education of the handicapped (Schipper, 1980; Tung, 1980). Because of these factors, education professionals are concerned with supplying appropriate educational services and are called upon to plan, project and communicate in order to obtain the legislative commitments needed for this population (Burello, et al., 1978).

Another area of concern for the special education professional is role ambiguity, resentment and interpersonal problems between special and regular staff members and administration (Dixon, 1980). Maslach and Jackson (1981) cite job turnover, absenteeism and low morale as results of burnout among these types of professionals. The increased amount of time that administrators spend recruiting, hiring and providing orientation for new special services staff indicates an acute problem (Dixon, 1980). The specific causes of special educator burnout, according to Holland, (1982) are:

a) inadequate pay
b) lack of mobility
c) public scrunity of schools
d) media assaults

e) budget reversals

f) inadequate professional training

g) increasing amounts of paperwork

h) discipline problems with students

i) lack of extrinsic rewards

j) lack of perceived student success

k) lack of administrative support

l) lack of co-worker support

m) bureaucratic red tape

Similarly, a recent study conducted by Bensky, Shaw, Gouse, Bates, Dixon and Beane (1980) indicated that the following job related characteristics (in rank order) to be the most stressful to special education professionals:

a) student load

b) teaching (implementation and preparation)

c) job-related work after hours

d) interaction with parents

e) placement decisions

f) student staffings

The best predictors of perceived stress for special educators were "clear role expectations and discrepancy between teacher's perception of the role versus others' expectations of the teacher's role" (Bensky, et al. 1980). Therefore, the better the special educator understood the job expectations held by others for his/her educational role, the more perceived stress was decreased. On the other hand, the perception of job related stress was

increased by a discrepancy between special educators' expectations and others' expectations for the special educator's educational role. It is important to note that in the literature reviewed, that the two role clarity variables had more impact on stress than did all the task-specific stressors; thus, strategies for stress prevention/reduction should be responsive to special educators' needs for role clarity.

Just as the symptoms of burnout are many and varied, so are the remedies and preventions. Burnout prevention can be accomplished at the organizational level through program strategy, changes, and interventions (Dixon, et al., 1980:32) specify the role of the special education administrators in fostering individual and organizational mental health:

1. Diagnose the environmental conditions influencing the organization or individual.

2. Plan and design possible intervention strategies that focus on the stress conditions.

3. Implement appropriate change strategies aimed at eliminating or minimizing stress conditions.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and the mental health status of the organization or individual.

Hersey and Blanchard (1972) provide two models that may be useful to the administrator in diagnosing environmental situations that might be causing

organizational and individual stress conditions, respectively. They suggest that in planning for change one keep in mind the four levels of change: a) knowledge changes, b) attitudinal changes, c) individual behavior changes, and d) group or organizational performance changes. The actual strategies used by a particular administrator would, of course, depend on the situation and the people involved. Whenever possible, the administrator should avoid coercing the organization or staff member into a particular change. Shaw, Bensky, Dixon, and Bonneau (1980) focus on particular approaches that leadership personnel such as special education supervisors can utilize to manage stress and prevent burnout among special educators:

1. Provide professionals an accountable means to specify the role and student load for themselves.

2. Ensure that all other school personnel know and understand the agreed upon role and responsibilities for special educators.

3. When hiring new staff, provide a complete job description.

4. New staff member should receive ongoing support during that first critical year of adjustment.

5. Provide support staff so they may productively handle the responsibilities assigned them.

6. Administrators need to encourage or at least be more open to role modifications, changes, and transfers.

The ultimate responsibility, however, lies within the individual preventing burnout, according to Casteel and Matthew (1984). Personal management skills, relationship skills, outlook--or attitude change skills and stamina skills were all cited as avoidance techniques by (Melendiz, Albisu, de Gusman and Rafael, 1983). Messer, Amis and Atkin (1981), offered the following list of stress/burnout prevention/reduction aids:

a) monitor signals of uncommon pressures

b) obtain good nutrition and exercise habits

c) withdraw a bit occasionally

d) identify unreasonable demands on oneself

e) end unpleasant relationships

f) convert worry into action

g) take vacations

h) set goals rather than passively accepting those set by others

i) act on what must be done, rather than avoid it

j) accept the possibility of failure without loosing a sense of self-worth

k) practice stress reduction techniques

Time management, cognitive restructuring, time analysis, relaxation training, biofeedback and visualization are some of the suggested methods by Casteel and Matthews (1984), in alleviating or preventing burnout. Burnout is a whole person problem and the solutions can be found in every dimension of an individual's life. An

intervention method developed by McKay, Davis and Fanninf (1981) in coping with burnout is a technique involving the individual restructuring his thinking in the following ways:

1) realizing that there are negative emotional reactions that are unwarranted;

2) examining his or her thought pattern citing the distortion (s);

3) developing new ways of thinking about his or her circumstances which led to positive emotions.

Everly and Girdono (1980) had yet another method in remediating burnout. They call it autogenics, which means a self-generating technique for triggering the physiological relaxation response.

Since special education professionals are often not in a position to alter a department's program (e.g., number of students served, workload, student contact hours, faculty meetings, student staffings, etc.), personal remedies are of particular importance. The special education professional must be ultimately responsible for their own effectiveness. The educator will need to initiate solutions to cope with his/her own job-related stress. Weiskopf (1980) suggests the following ways that special educators may protect themselves against burnout:

1. Special educators need to know in advance the type of emotional stress their particular job entails.

2. Special educators need to set realistic goals for themselves and their students.

3. Special educators need to delegate responsibility for such tasks as paperwork and nonteaching duties to teacher aides and parent volunteers in order to relieve some pressure and reduce the workload.

4. Special educators should avoid isolation from other staff.

5. While on the job, teachers need to break up the amount of continuous direct contact that they have with students.

6. Staying mentally alert when away from the job is significant to preventing burnout.

7. Physical exercise is recommended to relieve stress and tension that have built up during the day.

8. To alleviate boredom, special educators need to be more creative on the job. Repetition and routines are inherent in special education; however, newness and variety create excitement and interest for all educators and their students.

9. Special educators may participate in active or passive hobbies and special interests not related to the job. Professionals need to work toward building their own support networks, and administrators need to be available to help in the process. Excessive special education stress may also be prevented by taking a sabbatical or a leave of absence, changing job duties, or sharing a contract with another instructor (Kurtz, 1980).

Ultimately, burnout affects the students. Burned out professionals think only of their own personal survival in the classroom. They cannot be caring for or listening to the needs of their students. At best, a burned out teacher neither prevents progress nor furthers it. At worst, since exceptional individuals usually lack the ego strength of so called "regular" individuals, a cynical, negative educator could seriously impair an individual's progress academically and socially (Weiskopf, 1980).

It was evident from the literature review that the prevention of burnout among special services personnel will be the final concern of administrators due to the ineffectiveness of burned out special services staff who are often unable to recognize their own ineffectiveness. To prevent staff members from becoming ineffective, administrators will be called upon to understand the stress that is affecting them and provide assistance through personnel training and inservice (Dixon, 1980; Orelove, 1978). A Practicum designed to identify topics suitable for an inservice training program for special education professionals on the control of burnout was deemed appropriate.

Definition of Terms

In initiating the study, some basic terms were identified to help understand the intent and purpose of the study and assist in interpreting the results. The selected terms are listed below:

1. Special education professional: Persons who are providing educational services to handicapped individuals in a community college setting.

2. Stress: Stress resides in all individuals and is used synonymously with burnout in this study. However, burnout is a distinctive kind of work-related stress (Greenberger, 1981).

3. Burnout: Maslach, who conducted the pioneering research, defines burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that frequently occurs among individuals who do 'people work'--spend considerable time in close encounters with others under conditions of chronic tension and stress" (Maslach and Jackson, 1979:61). Burnout is thus specifically viewed as a phenomenon related to job stress (Maslach, 1982).

4. Inservice Training Program: A four hour seminar offered by the Continuing Education Committee to departments on pre-selected topics, with administrative approval at Oxnard College.

Limitations of The Study

The study had limitations that were identified. These limitations may place restrictions upon the applicability, or general usefulness of the study. In considering the intent and scope of this study, the following limitations were identified.

1. The study was limited to only identification of topics and not the entire curriculum development of

materials for an inservice training program on the control of burnout.

2. The study was limited to only the faculty members of the Special Education Department at Oxnard College as members of the expert panel to decide on the suitable topics for the program.

3. Moderator variables of the participants of the expert panel were not considered in this study. Variables such as previous knowledge and/or participation in programs on the control of burnout.

PROCEDURES

The descriptive method of research was used. An extensive review of literature was conducted to determine the suitable topics for an inservice training program for special education professionals on the control of burnout. The resources utilized for the literature search included the libraries of the University of California Los Angeles, California State University Los Angeles, and the California State University Northridge. A Lancers database search was also utilized through the Office of the Los Angeles Superintendent of Schools. The literature reviewed included readings on causes of burnout, causes of stress, burnout in higher education, burnout prevention, the costs and effects of burnout, stress prevention, and inservice training programs on burnout. Special emphasis and an additional literature search was conducted on those readings emphasizing burnout in special education, burnout specific to the special education professional, inservice training programs for special educators and the prevention and alleviation of burnout for special education professionals.

A list was comprised that consisted of the following: definition of stress and burnout; causes, costs and effects

of burnout in teaching and special education; incidence of burnout in higher education and special education; prevention and control of burnout for special education professionals; and training programs on the control of burnout.

The special education professional employed part or full-time by Oxnard College for the spring of 1986 semester was asked in a regular faculty meeting to volunteer to be on an expert panel in order to identify topics suitable for an inservice training program on the control of burnout. A special education professional from each of the following specialities: Learning Disabilities, Deaf and Hearing Impaired, Speech and Language, Counseling, Vocational Assessment, and Adaptive Physical Education was asked to volunteer to comprise the panel. One professional special educator volunteered from each of the six specialty areas to form the expert panel.

A meeting was held with the expert panel and a list of topics (Appendix A) was presented to the panel along with the review of literature of this study. There was a thorough discussion of the topics by the expert panel. A second meeting concluded with a final list of suitable topics for an inservice training program on the control of burnout for special education professionals (Appendix B).

FINDINGS

Findings From the Review of Literature

For this study, potential victims of burnout were defined as people who occupy roles in industry, institutions, agencies, and the human and social services field. An intensive review of literature focused on the concepts of burnout that has fostered the idea that those familiar with research and theory on psychological stress will recognize burnout as a particular kind of stress response (Cherniss, 1980:16). Pines (1981:195) identified four major goals for any in-house training on the topic of burnout. These four major goals are:

1. Introduction of the concepts of burnout and tedium, clarification of their symptoms, and discussion of how people experience and express them.

2. Identification of work stresses commonly causing tedium and burnout in workers, in an attempt to help participants take responsibility for actions directed toward positive change.

3. Development of cognitive clarity in the distinction between two categories of stressful work features: those that are under the control of the individual and that can be modified, and those that are

an inherent part of the work and must be accepted as such.

4. Development of tools for coping such as the improvement of individual adjustment via more flexible utilization of different coping strategies and the modification of work features that are under the individual's control. A central topic is the development and use of support systems.

A review of the works on stress and burnout as authored by Bry (1978), Casteel and Matthews (1984), Cherniss (1980), Everly and Girdana (1980), George (1983), Maslach (1982), and Pines (1981) were utilized in producing the outline.

Findings From Panel Review

The first meeting of the panel of experts consisted of an explanation of the study being conducted. The panel then reviewed, revised, and made additions to the outline which was developed from the current review of literature provided. Each of the experts was initially given a list of possible topics as suggestions as where to begin in developing topics for the inservice training program. The experts unanimously agreed that a question and answer session on burnout relative to their concerns was a definite topic to be included. The expert panel also felt that a topic focusing on the symptoms of burnout would be essential in order to develop the skills in monitoring themselves.

Burnout in relationship to special educators was stated to be the main area of interest to the panel. They commented on identifying with the personal aspects of the topics that were developing from that area and reported feeling encouraged that researchers were addressing issues that were important and critical to them.

When the topic of burnout in human services personnel was discussed, they began making recommendations that included not only wanting administration to support an inservice training program based on the final selection of topics, but also wanted them to receive this study as well to increase their awareness in regard to the educator's special needs.

A favorable reaction of the panel was noted when discussions included time management and time analysis components as inservice topics was included. However, the topics that received the most enthusiastic responses were relaxation techniques and relationship skills.

The experts concluded the initial meeting in stating that they liked the topics identified and felt that those selected were of key importance to them. They expressed a desire to take the review of literature with them and meet again after having a chance to review it in more depth. A second meeting was scheduled to finalize the list of topics.

The second meeting of the panel of experts met two weeks after the initial meeting, as previously scheduled.

The panel concurred on including the following topics to the list, they were: 1) biofeedback, 2) health, 3) exercise, 4) creative visualization techniques, autogenics, and 6) a discussion of how to keep the training working.

The general consensus of the panel of experts was to present the topics that were finally agreed upon at the second meeting (Appendix B) and this Practicum to the entire Oxnard College administration, rather than solely to the Special Education Administrator. They also felt that the information obtained on burnout was so valuable that they should share this information with the other special educators in the District. The panel also decided to expand the inservice training to a District inservice, rather than a college event. This decision was going to be made as a formal proposal to the District office.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study indicated that the faculty of special education professionals perceived that an inservice training program for the control of burnout was deemed very appropriate. The literature review indicated that special education professionals are an identified high-risk group for both stress and burnout. The major key to the prevention and cure of stress/burnout is the provision of support systems within the organization.

The research regarding special educator burnout appears to be limited and precise data did not seem to be available for this study. Additional research may determine the scope and effects of burnout among educators, both "regular" and "special". Researchers need to determine and evaluate which variables are most likely to produce burnout symptoms among the special education professional. The literature review has shown that occupational stress (negative environmental factors) contributes to faculty burnout. How special education professionals perceive stress factors in terms of their personal success and ability to cope with emotional stress determines whether or not they will experience burnout. Special educators may be subjected to additional

emotional stress due to the nature of the job and the problems associated with exceptional students.

Some means of preventing burnout have been cited in this study, although there is no panacea. Field experiments need to be conducted to determine which preventative methods would be most beneficial in alleviating burnout among special educators. Professionals intent on maintaining their effectiveness, should be aware of burnout as a potential problem to themselves and their students.

The implications of this study can be far reaching for both faculty and administration. The faculty should know that it is important for them to not only understand the concept, but also be an active participant in the prevention of it. Administrators need to become aware of their role in preventing/alleviating burnout, not only for faculty members but for themselves as well. There appear to be many "stressors" in the academic environment, such as decreased enrollment, budget decreases, and limited facilities.

The implications for the faculty to accept that they are a high-risk group for stress and burnout can have a tremendous impact on the institution considering the cost and effects of burnout alone. The administration should take note of this study and its implication on the total institution.

Based on the results and interpretation of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The special education professional at Oxnard College should share the information of this study with other special education professionals in the District.

2. The special education department should disseminate the study findings to the entire administration of Oxnard College and the District Office Administrators.

3. More communication and literature should be shared with the special education professionals in the District on the prevention and control of burnout in special education and higher education.

4. That the Oxnard College special education administrator along with the Continuing Education Department approve the inservice training program(s) for special education professionals on burnout utilizing the topics listed in Appendix B of this study.

5. Expand the Inservice Training Program to include invitations to the entire staff of special education professionals in the District.

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APPENDIX A

TOPICS SUITABLE FOR AN INSERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS ON CONTROL OF BURNOUT

(FIRST OUTLINE)

I. WHAT IS BURNOUT?

A. Definition of Burnout (Brodsky, 1980)

B. Definition of Stress (Brodsky, 1980)

C. Components of Burnout (Pines, 1981)

1) Physical exhaustion
2) Chronic fatigue
3) Emotional exhaustion
4) Depersonalization
5) Reduced personal accomplishments

D. Symptoms of Burnout (Cedoline, 1982)

1) Disillusionment
2) Continuing frustration
3) Cynical attitudes
4) Apathy
5) Loss of vitality

II. BURNOUT IN RELATIONSHIP TO SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS (Fass, 1984)

A. Burnout of the Special Education Professional

B. Burnout in Human Services Personnel

C. Effects of Burnout on Employment

D. Effects of Burnout on Personal Life

E. Warning "Signals"

1) Passing through warning stages
2) Early detection leads to prevention of final stages of development

F. Burnout is Easily Remedied Upon Early Detection

III. HOW TO DEAL WITH AND/OR PREVENT BURNOUT

A. Time Management - Five step process (George, 1983). The five steps consist of: time analysis, goal setting, prioritization, delegation and action.

B. Time Analysis - Exploration of how each Special Education Professional spends their time in the present. Guide as to how to develop and categorize inventory to see how time is actually spent. Work categories would include such things as: socializing routine tasks, low priority work, productive work, meetings, conferences, and telephone calls. Home and leisure activities include such things as: television, conversation, hobbies, reading, sports, civic activities, travel, shopping, household chores, childcare, daydreaming, cooking, eating, sexual activities, and personal hygiene and grooming (Casteel, Frank, and Matthews, 1984).

C. Relaxation Training Techniques - Exposure to various relaxation tools and methods to allow the individual to elicit his/her own relaxation responses. (Shaw, 1981)

D. Creative Visualization Techniques - There are two specific visualization techniques to use according to (Bry, 1978). They are receptiveness (starting with a certain theme), and programming (setting up a positive picture to create the pictured situation or what it may represent symbolically).

APPENDIX B

TOPICS SUITABLE FOR AN INSERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS ON CONTROL OF BURNOUT

(FINAL OUTLINE)

I. WHAT IS BURNOUT?

A. Definition of Burnout (Brodsky, 1980)

B. Definition of Stress (Brodsky, 1980)

C. Components of Burnout (Pines, 1981)

1) Physical exhaustion
2) Chronic fatigue
3) Emotional exhaustion
4) Depersonalization
5) Reduced personal accomplishments

D. Question and Answer Session on the Participants Own Burnout Questions and/or Issues

E. Symptoms of Burnout (Cedoline, 1982)

1) Disillusionment
2) Continuing frustration
3) Cynical attitudes
4) Apathy
5) Loss of vitality

II. BURNOUT IN RELATIONSHIP TO SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS (Fass, 1984)

A. Burnout of the Special Education Professional

B. Burnout in Human Services Personnel- A handout on key feelings indicating burnout will be included as part of this topic.

C. Effects of Burnout on Employment

D. Effects of Burnout on Personal Life

E. Warning "Signals" - A handout/questionnaire on the warning signals of burnout will be included as part of this topic. It will be designed to ask self-introspective questions which the participant can ask her/himself.

1) Passing through warning stages
2) Early detection leads to prevention of final stage development

F. Burnout is Easily Remedied Upon Early Detection- "A Working Guide for Professionals"--This working guide will include reminder of burnout prevention tools and techniques.

III. HOW TO DEAL WITH AND/OR PREVENT BURNOUT

A. Time Management - Five step process (George, 1983). The five steps consist of: time analysis, goal setting, prioritization, delegation and action.

B. Time Analysis - Exploration of how each Special Education Professional spends their time in the present. Guide as to how to develop and categorize inventory to see how time is actually spent. Work categories would include such things as: socializing, routine tasks, low priority work, productive work, meetings, conferences, and telephone calls. Home and leisure activities include such things as: television, conversation, hobbies, reading, sports, civic activities, travel, shopping, household chores, childcare, daydreaming, cooking, eating, sexual activities, sleeping, personal hygiene and grooming (Casteel and Matthews, 1984).

C. Relaxation Training Techniques - Exposure to various relaxation tool and methods to allow the individual to elicit his/her own relaxation responses. (Shaw, 1981)

D. Creative Visualization Techniques - There are two specific visualization techniques to use according to Bry, 1978). They are receptiveness (starting with a certain theme) and programming (setting up a positive picture to create the pictured situation or what it may represent symbolically).

E. Discussion of How to Keep the Training Working For You- Included in this session will also be topics presented for possible additional workshops and a survey of which would be the most desirable (George, 1983; Shaw, 1981).

F. Autogenics - Everly and Girdana (1980), defined autogenics to mean self-generating. It is a high level cognitive technique triggering other components such as imagery, deep breathing, and self-talk or self-messages. Autogenics is a technique whereby a person talks to the body and tells the body to relax.

G. Biofeedback - Training individuals in the self-regulation of psychophysiology. Biofeedback can promote the individual's self-exploration, self-awareness, and self-control. The possibilities of

H. Health and Exercise - Explanation of the importance good health and fitness play in combating burnout (Cherniss, 1980).

I. Relationship Skills - Techniques and tools in the importance of effective skills in dealing with relationships on the job, family, friends, and focusing especially on the relationship of dealing with one's self (Cherniss, 1980).